

HAMILTON (J.B.)

BIOLOGICAL DEPARTMENT
OF
RUSH MEDICAL COLLEGE.

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RUSH MEDICAL COLLEGE.

The fiftieth annual commencement of Rush Medical College was ushered in this year by unusual ceremonies. The corner-stone of the new Biological Department was laid by the trustees and the faculty, addresses being made by Professors Holmes, Hamilton and Miller. After the addresses, Prof. Nicholas Senn held a clinic from 10 to 12. At 2 P.M. the usual exercises were held at the Academy of Music.

Prof. Hamilton's address is as follows :

THE CORNER-STONE OF THE NEW BIOLOGICAL DEPARTMENT OF RUSH MEDICAL COLLEGE.

BY JOHN B. HAMILTON, M.D., LL.D.,

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Mr. President of the University, Professors and Alumni of Rush Medical College:—To-day marks an event which we trust may begin a new era in the history of Rush Medical College.

We here with simple ceremony, in the presence of those interested, lay a corner-stone. On that corner-stone we propose to erect a superstructure and dedicate it to the welfare of mankind.

This is the age of realism. The age of symbolism has gone. You will, therefore, see in that superstructure that is to be, no rich entablature, ornate columns, nor peristyle. You will not see the statue of Æsculapius with the Apollonian rod in one hand, the fir

cone in the other, nor the image of the goat that nourished him in infancy, nor that of the faithful dog that guarded his juvenile slumber; nor the cock the emblem of early vigilance, nor the statue of Prosperity, nor that of Dreams.

These in past ages were indeed the mute but ornamental occupants of the Æsculapian temples. Our students do not need the visible emblems of sentiment to urge them. We simply appeal to their love of truth. Truth for itself, and truth for the benefit of the human race.

In the enlargement of the teaching facilities of this college, Mr. President, the faculty have undertaken the work unaided. They will not be unrewarded for their sacrifices, if they succeed in giving the students such improved means for the prosecution of their studies as may the better equip them for the combat with disease, and the relief of human suffering.

But they have even higher hopes. They hope to stimulate in their pupils a further research into the vast area of the unknown. The faculty do not intend or wish to have a monopoly of the medical knowledge to be stored here. They wish this new laboratory to become a treasury, wherein scientific knowledge may be collected, and from whence it may be distributed.

To that end we establish this biological department of Rush Medical College. We shall here have improved facilities for the study of anatomy, the experimentation of physiology, practical demonstration in normal and pathological histology, and the recent addition to medical science, bacteriology.

Some discoveries in medical science have made epochs in medical history. We are now in the second decade of the great epoch inaugurated by Pasteur's immortal discoveries. No truth in medicine, since the discovery of the circulation of the

blood, has been so far reaching as that of the existence of pathogenic organisms. It has caused a radical change in our doctrines of the causation of a large class of diseases. It has revolutionized the practice of surgery. It has made new operations possible, and has saved thousands of lives. It has reëstablished the practice of quarantine on a scientific basis. It has wonderfully stimulated the study of hygiene in all its departments, and destroyed the fear of epidemics, provided only that scope be given for the free practice of the preventive measures demonstrated to be necessary.

Biological study is not only one of the highest practical utility, but it has beauty and boundless interest. When the student begins to study cell formation, the geometric arrangement, and the wonderfully beautiful colorings and kaleidoscopic chemical changes sometimes developed under his vision, he soon feels with the poet that

"The meanest floweret of the vale,
The simplest note that swells the gale,
The common sun, the air, the skies,
To him are opening paradise."

With the construction of the biological department we shall be enabled to relieve, to a certain extent, the overcrowded building now occupied, and for some years at least, we shall be able to keep abreast of the more favored institutions.

It is not asserted that we have yet reached our ideal—far from it. There is no endowment for the chair of the new director, nor indeed for a single chair in the institution, and the interior equipment of the new laboratory might well be the object of large expenditures.

Chicago, although enterprising and generous, is still young. Her industrious citizens have had so many worthy objects of their attention that the needs of this college have escaped their notice. Bos-

ton, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, San Francisco, and even Cleveland have been more fortunate, for in each of these places gentlemen have come to the front to place their medical colleges in the first rank.

The ability of Brainard, the brilliancy of Gunn, the Herculean labors of Parkes and their colleagues, have made the past of Rush Medical College a glorious memory.

Notwithstanding the adage, that "an acre of performance is worth the whole land of promise," we may fairly express the hope that the new department, the genius of Senn, the devotion of the faculty, and mayhap the wisdom of some as yet undiscovered local philanthropist, may give the school an even more glorious future. A school to which will cling lasting and pleasant memories of days well spent, and one which the alumnus of the future may, with true filial devotion, seek to revisit at each annual reunion.

